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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001971

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PRM/ANE, EUR/SE AND NEA/NGA
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GENEVA FOR RMA
CENTCOM FOR J3, J5 AND POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2013
TAGS: EAID IZ PREF PREL TU
SUBJECT: TFIZ01: MFA ON SOURCING AND TRANSIT OF FOOD FOR
IRAQ AND OTHER HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE ISSUES

(U) Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Deutsch for
reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

Summary:

¶11. (C) Emboffs and Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) Leader discussed humanitarian planning issues on March 26 with Feza Ozturk, MFA Head of Department for International Political Organizations. In response to a looming shortage of wheat flour in northern Iraq, the World Food Program has applied to MFA for permission to send 6,000 tons of wheat flour across the border. Turkey will shortly approve release of 50,000 tons of wheat flour from its strategic reserve for humanitarian purposes. Ozturk confirmed that internally displaced persons (IDPs) had not sought refuge on Turkey's borders. Ozturk expects in the next several days to initiate the ad hoc humanitarian aid coordination group suggested by A/S Dewey earlier this month. End Summary.

WFP Transit:

¶12. (SBU) Ozturk told us that John Murray, the UN World Food Program Emergency Coordinator, had contacted him about emerging food shortages in northern Iraq, which had not received as great a level of advance rations as the center and south prior to the conflict. Turkey is prepared to release 50,000 metric tons of wheat flour for Iraq from its strategic reserve, which would then be replenished by WFP. Ozturk stated that this would require Cabinet approval, expected within days. Turkey would do everything possible to facilitate transportation of food relief to northern Iraq, but Ozturk warned that there could be transport bottlenecks slowing down the flow of aid. He said the key problem is security for Turkish drivers and equipment delivering food to Iraq.

¶13. (SBU) Murray told us later in the day that WFP was trying to address a Kurdistan Democratic Party request for wheat flour, and that he had formally requested MFA approval to ship 6,000 tons to Erbil on an emergency basis. He said WFP had not addressed the security issue on the Iraqi side yet, but guessed that KDP authorities would make the necessary security arrangements.

Current Situation on the Border and in Northern Iraq:

¶14. (SBU) Ozturk confirmed that IDPs have not arrived at the Turkish border. Instead, IDPs appear to be headed for rural areas, and particularly to higher elevations about 6 to 12 hours from the border. Turkey has not set up any camps and will not do so until they are needed.

Coordination Mechanism:

¶15. (C) Ozturk advised that the Turkish General Staff and other agencies had approved the concept of MFA hosting an ad hoc, civilian humanitarian assistance coordination meeting with the UN agencies and Embassy representatives. He told us he could not call the first meeting until he received written confirmation of the interagency decision, which he expected in the next day or two. Ozturk suggested the initial meeting include MFA, Embassy and a UNHCR representative. Mission Disaster Relief Officer encouraged Ozturk to include a

broader group from the UN, and particularly WFP. Ozturk said he expected an interagency approval in the near future for the U.S. request to site humanitarian daily rations in Turkey.

NGOs:

16. (U) Ozturk stated that MFA was reviewing NGO applications for work in Turkey as well as for transit of goods to Iraq on an expedited basis. He reiterated the GOT's position that NGOs would be permitted to cross the border to respond to humanitarian needs, but that Turkey would consider carefully how many and which organizations should be approved.

PEARSON